

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-10 L-02 ACDA-10

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-04 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 SS-14 NSC-07 DRC-01 /068 W

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 5619

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE; MEETING WITH ITALIAN OFFICIALS

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN 9 OCTOBER MEETING WITH SENIOR ITALIAN OFFICIALS IN ROME, USDEFAD (LEGERE) ELABORATED ON RATIONALE AND SUBSTANCE OF US VIEWS ON KEY ELEMENTS FOR MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE. ENSUING DISCUSSION PERMITTED ITALIANS TO INDICATE THEIR GENERAL SUPPORT FOR US APPROACH, WHILE REGISTERING: (A) THEIR HOPE THAT US WOULD NOT, THROUGH OVER-ZEALOUSNESS, ENGENDER COUNTERPRODUCTIVE EUROPEAN REACTIONS, AND (B) THEIR FEELING THAT LANDMARK MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE EFFORT OUGHT NOT VIRTUALLY TO IGNORE NATO'S SOUTHERN REGION. END SUMMARY.

1. ON 9 OCTOBER DEFAD (LEGERE) MET WITH ITALIAN OFFICIALS AT HEAD-QUARTERS OF NATIONAL DEFENSE STAFF IN ROME FOR PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING AND PROMOTING US POSITION ON MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE. ITALIANS PRESENT WERE GENERAL LEONELLI, DEPUTY CHIEF OF NATIONAL DEFENSE STAFF; MINISTER DA RIN OF NATO SECTION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; COLONEL ROMANO OF PLANNING DIVISION OF DEFENSE STAFF; CONFIDENTIAL

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AND ADMIRAL MACCHIAVELLI, ITALIAN DEFAD AT NATO BRUSSELS. HEAD OF EMBASSY ROME POL-MIL SECTION (SILVA) ACCOMPANIED LEGERE.

2. ITALIAN REPRESENTAATIVES HAD OBVIOUSLY READ US DISCUSSION

DRAFT THOROUGHLY. LEGERE OPENED WITH DETAILED COVERAGE OF KEY ELEMENTS, DRAWING ON US DRAFT AND ON RECENT GUIDANCE MESSAGES, APPROXIMATELY AS FOLLOWS:

A. AT PRESENT JUNCTURE, CONVENTIONAL ELEMENT OF NATO'S DETERRENT TRADITION REQUIRES EMPHASIS.

B. A SATISFACTORY CONVENTIONAL BALANCE NATO-WARSAW PACT IS WITHIN REACH, PROVIDED NATO NATIONS CONTINUE IMPROVING THEIR CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITIES, ESPECIALLY THROUGH INTERNATIONALLY COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS PERMITTING GREATER EFFECTIVENESS AT LITTLE, IF ANY, INCREASE IN OVER-ALL COSTS.

C. RATIONALIZATION, FLEXIBILITY, STANDARDIZATION, AND SPECIALIZATION OFFER PARTICULARLY PROMISING APPROACHES TO SUCH IMPROVEMENTS IN CONVENTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS.

D. MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE DUE NEXT SPRING SHOULD THEREFORE BE MORE COMPREHENSIVE THAN HERETOFORE (1) BY COVERING NOT ONLY FORCE OBJECTIVES BUT ALSO SUPPORTING PROGRAMS, TO INCLUDE SELECTIVE COMMITMENTS TO SPECIFIC RATIONALIZATION, FLEXIBILITY, ETC. INITIATIVES; AND (2) BY DIRECTING ITS PROVISIONS NOT ONLY TO NMAS BUT TO DPC AND TO ALLIED GOVERNMENTS AS WELL.

E. IF IT IS TO FULFILL SUCH AN ENLARGED PURPOSE, THE MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE DUE NEXT SPRING SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE FOR, OR POINT TOWARD, ENOUGH MODIFICATION OF NATO'S TRADITIONAL PLANNING SYSTEM TO PERMIT THE DIRECTION AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF EFFORTS IN THE FIELDS OF OPERATIONAL PLANNING, PROGRAM PLANNING, AND WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT PLANNING (LATTER PART SECTION III OF US DISCUSSION DRAFT).

3. LEONELLI'S RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS WERE:

A. HE GENERALLY SUPPORTS US POSITION THAT IT IS TIME TO LOOK AT WP'S WEAK POINTS AS WELL AS NATO'S, AND HAS QUOTE NO DOUBT THAT A BETTER CONVENTIONAL BALANCE IS WITHIN REACH UNQUOTE. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE DOES NOT THINK THERE IS MUCH FUTURE FOR GROUND FORCE RATIONALIZATION, ETC. IN SOUTHERN REGION BECAUSE OF GEOGRAPHICAL IMPERATIVES, BUT GRANTS POSSIBILITY OF SOME QUOTE MANEUVERING UNQUOTE OF NAVAL, LOGISTICAL, AND CONCEIVABLY AIR RESOURCES THERE. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE REFERRED TO RADIO RELAY COMMUNICATIONS COOPERATION BETWEEN NATO AND ITALIAN FACILITIES ALONG ADRIATIC AXIS, AS WELL AS TO CONSIDERABLE US-NATO COMMUNICATIONS INTEGRATION ALREADY UNDER WAY IN SOUTH.

B. ON STANDARDIZATION, HE GRANTS COST-EFFECTIVE AND MILITARY ADVANTAGES, BUT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT NATIONAL INTERESTS STANDING IN THE WAY ARE NECESSARILY ALL GREEDY OR OTHERWISE BAD. A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF QUOTE LOGISTICAL SECURITY UNQUOTE (MEANING FREEDOM FROM

TOTAL OR EXCESSIVE LOGISTICAL DEPENDENCE ON OTHERS) IS DESIRABLE. DESIDES, IT IS NOT WISE FOR EUROPE AS A WHOLE TO HAVE ITS DEFENSE DEPEND EXCLUSIVELY OR TOO HEAVILY ON US (LATER VARIATIONS BY DARIN ON THIS THEME APPEAR BELOW).

C. FLEXIIBILITY, ESPECIALLY FOR GROUND FORCES, IS PRIMARILY APPLICABLE IN THE CENTRAL REGION. IMPORTANT REINFORCEMENT ASPECT OF AIR FLEXIBILITY IN SOUTHERN REGION IS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED (REFERENCE WAS APPARENTLY TO COBS IN ITALY WHICH, OF COURSE, ARE NOT COMPLETE), AND ONLY QUASI-MANIFESTATION OF REINFORCEMENT FLEXIBILITY IN THE SOUTH IS LONG-STANDING PROVISION FOR ARRIVAL OF A US DIVISION THERE LONG AFTER M-DAY.

D. SPECIALIZATION IN THE SOUTHERN REGION SEEMS ALMOST IM-POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE GEOGRAPHY. BESIDES, PROPOSALS FOR TRAINING SPECIALIZATION -- FOR EXAMPLE, FLYING SCHOOLS -- ALWAYS SEEM TO PROVIDE THAT EVERYONE GO TO THE UNITED STATES; BUT ITALY WANTS TO TRAIN ITS OWN FLIERS, EVEN AT SOME SACRIFICE OF OPTIMUM COST EFFECTIVENESS. (HE NOTED IN AN ASIDE THAT ITALIAN NAVAL AVIATORS DO TRAIN IN THE US, HOWEVER).

E. IN SUM, HE SAID, HE AGREED WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE US DRAFT PAPER.

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SAJ-01 SS-14 NSC-07 DRC-01 /068 W

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R 101715Z OCT 74

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4. DARIN'S RESPONSE CONSISTED BASICALLY OF FRIENDLY CAUTIONS TO THE US AS IT GOES ABOUT THE PROMOTION OF MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE AND RELATED NATO INITIATIVES, SINCE SOME US THESES STRIKE HIM AS OF QUOTE EXTREME POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DELICACY UNQUOTE.

A. HE AGREES WITH US EMPHASIS ON BETTER USE OF RESOURCES TO HELP NARROW OR CLOSE CONVENTIONAL BALANCE GAP, BUT IS AFRAID OF ZEALOTRY IN OVER-EMPHASIS. FOR EXAMPLE, WITH RESPECT TO FBS OF 6TH FLEET IN SALT CONTEXT, HE DOES NOT DOUBT THE US PLEDGE TO CONSULT ON FBS BUT NOTES THAT THE COURSE OF INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS IS ALWAYS ESSENTIALLY UNFORESEEABLE. HE WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE EMPHASIS ON CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY DEROGATE OR ENDANGER NUCLEAR FLEXIBILITY, AND CITED THE ADMITTEDLY PROPAGANDISTIC RECENT BREZHNEV STATEMENT ON DENUCLEARIZING THE MEDITERRANEAN AS A CASE SOMEHOW IN POINT.

B. HIS QUOTE APPREHENSIONS UNQUOTE EXTEND TO FEARING THAT THE CURRENT US EMPHASIS ON CONVENTIONAL FORCES MAY LEAD THE US TO DANGEROUS INITIATIVES IN THE MBFR CONTEXT.
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C. HE URGES THAT THE UNITED STATES BEGIN TAKING MORE NOTICE AND ACCOUNT OF THE MOVEMENT TOWARD A EUROPEAN DEFENSE IDENTITY. A REFERENCE TO THE EUROGROUP ON PAGE 7 OF THE US DRAFT PAPER WAS ALL RIGHT AS FAR AS IT WENT, HE SAID, BUT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF IT HAD ADDED QUOTE ANY OTHER FORM OF EUROPEAN COOPERATION THAT MAY DEVELOP IN THE FUTURE UNQUOTE. THE EUROGROUP IS FINE, BUT THE NINE (OR THE EIGHT, LEAVING OUR IRELAND) MUST PURSUE A FORM OF FUTURE EUROPEAN COOPERATION, INCLUDING DEFENSE, THAT INCLUDES FRANCE. HE ASKED IF THE US WOULD BE REALLY SYMPATHETIC TO THIS, WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN AN ENTITY COMPETITIVE WITH THE US.

D. HE COMMENTED ON STANDARDIZATION BY REFERRING TO WHAT HE CALLED QUOTE THE SUBMERSION UNQUOTE OF IMPORTANT EUROPEAN POLITICAL OBJECTIVES BY THE INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS PRESSING IN THE F-104 REPLACEMENT PREMISES. THIS EXAMPLE MAKES HIM WONDER IF THE MILITARY AND SOMETIMES NARROW ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF STANDARDIZATION ARE ALWAYS COMPATIBLE WITH LONG-TERM, BROAD-GAUGED EUROPEAN POLITICAL OBJECTIVES.

E. FINALLY, HE RECOMMENDED THAT MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE SOMEHOW TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIFFERENT NATURE OF MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION.

5. THANKING ITALIANS FOR THEIR GENERAL SUPPORT OF US DRAFT PAPER AND FOR THEIR FULL AND FRANK COMMENTS, LEGERE THEN MADE FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL POINTS:

A. HE GRANTED CURRENT ADMITTED PRIORITY OF PROBLEMS IN CENTRAL REGION, WITH CONSEQUENT FOCUS OF US MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE DRAFT THEREON. HE SAID THAT SOUTHERN REGION PROBLEMS NO DOUBT DIFFERENT IN MANY RESPECTS, BUT RATIONALIZATION, FLEXIBILITY, AND STANDARDIZATION OFFERED MANIFOLD MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES THAT WOULD SURELY FIND APPLICATIONS THERE. IN RESPONSE TO CAUTIONS CONCERNING ALLEGED US OVER-EMPHASIS ON ROSY CONVENTIONAL BALANCE AND ON STEAMROLLER STANDARDIZATION, LEGERE

STATED THAT PRAGMATIC COURSES OF ACTION STRUCK HIM AS CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING MIDDLE POSITIONS SATISFYING BOTH US AND EUROPEAN POLITICAL-MILITARY-ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS.

7. FOR EXAMPLE, AN OBJECTIVE CONVENTIONAL BALANCE ASSESSMENT
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MIGHT WELL TURN OUT TO SERVE SIMULTANEOUSLY AS CARROT FOR US AND STICK FOR EUROPEANS IN RESPECTIVE POLITICAL CONTEXTS. FOR ANOTHER EXAMPLE, THE MILITARY-ECONOMIC MERITS OF SOME KEY STANDARDIZATION PROPOSALS COULD OVERRIDE CERTAIN POLITICAL RESERVATIONS, WHEREAS OTHER AREAS OF PROPOSED STANDARDIZATION MIGHT RUN INTO DOMINATING POLITICAL OBSTACLES.

C. ON FUTURE EUROPEAN IDENTITY MENTIONED BY LEONELLI AND STRESSED BY DARIN, LEGERE MERELY MENTIONED PAST RECORD OF US SUPPORT FOR MOVEMENT TOWARD EUROPEAN INTERGRATION, ADDING THAT THIS FUTURE PROSPECT SHOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT HOBBLE NATO PROGRESS IN THE HERE AND NOW.

6. INFIRM INTERVENTION, DARIN COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON IDEA OF PRAGMATIC NATO ACTIONS ALONG LINES THAT WOULD MOVE TOWARD US OBJECTIVES WITHOUT ALARMING EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS AND PUBLICS TO POINT OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVENESS. BE CAREFUL ALSO IN RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS WHEN EUROPEAN PREOCCUPATIONS COME INTO THE PICTURE, HE SAID, AND BE CAREFUL NOT TO QUOTE DROWN THE LITTLE FLOWER UNQUOTE OF AN EMERGING EUROPEAN IDENTITY BY TRYING TO FORCE-FEED IT WITH TOO MUCH WATER TOO SOON. OTHER THAN WARNING US ALONG SUCH LINES, HE THOUGHT THE US DRAFT PAPER WAS ALL RIGHT.

7. COMMENT. ITALIANS CLEARLY APPRECIATED THIS VISIT AND SAID SO, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY HAD LEARNED IT WAS THE FIRST SUCH VISIT THIS FALL BY MISSION REPRESENTATIVE TO CAPITALS. DESPITE GENERAL DUTCH-UNCLE FLAVOR OF CAUTIONS TO IMPULSIVE NEPHEW, THEY DO APPEAR TO ACCEPT BASIC RATIONALE OF US APPROACH TO MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE; AND PERHAPS PARTLY AS A RESULT OF THIS VISIT AND THE CHANCE OF FULL HEARING IT GAVE THEM, THEY SHOULD PROBABLY SUPPORT LARGE LINES OF THAT APPROACH IN WEEKS AHEAD AND AT DECEMBER MINISTERIAL MEETING THE CHANCES FOR SUCH SUPPORT WOULD, MISSION BELIEVES, BE ENHANCED IF SECRETARY SCHLESINGER IN BILATERAL WITH ITALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER AT NPG NEXT MONTH COULD AGREE THAT IN ACTUAL DRAFTING OF MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE IN EARLY 1975, US WOULD PROPOSE OR SUPPORT INCLUSION OF APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE TAKING NOTE OF SOUTHERN REGION'S PROBLEMS
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 11 JUN 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ATO05619
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: NATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741091/abbryxte.tel
Line Count: 265
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: n/a
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE; MEETING WITH ITALIAN OFFICIALS
TAGS: MPOL, PFOR, NATO
To: STATE
SECDEF INFO USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
USLOSACLANT
CINCLANT
USDOCOSOUTH
ROME

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005